

opportunity to become independent, self-sufficient wage earners.

For almost all Americans, employment focuses on ability. But for people with disabilities, it is often the disability that takes precedence. We all have abilities and as responsible citizens, it is our imperative to apply them for the greater good. When all Americans work, communities will benefit as people with disabilities become self-sufficient, tax-paying citizens. I commend people with disabilities for their tireless efforts to share their abilities in the American workplace despite barriers, and hope that someday the high unemployment rate will be a thing of the past.

I am proud to support a program that helps us reach the goal of employment for all: the AbilityOne Program. The AbilityOne Program provides much-needed employment opportunities by using the purchasing power of the Federal Government to buy products and services from participating community-based nonprofit agencies that are dedicated to training and employing individuals with disabilities. In this program, people who are blind or who have other severe disabilities have the opportunity to acquire job skills and training, receive good wages and benefits and gain greater independence and quality of life.

In the United States, the program serves nearly 38,000 people with disabilities and generated approximately \$369 million in wages earned and \$1.6 billion in products sold. In Georgia alone, over 900 people with disabilities earned \$8.7 million in wages last year as a result of AbilityOne. I am proud that Georgia's 10th congressional district is home to brand-new AbilityOne contract at the Charlie Norwood VA Medical Center. The Honorable Charlie was an AbilityOne Congressional Champion during his years in office and I am proud to carry on his tradition of supporting people with disabilities and the fine work they do.

It is with great pleasure that I extend my support to the AbilityOne Program, its supporters, and its workers for making a difference in unemployment among people with disabilities in this country.

REGARDING THE LAND USE RESTRICTION PROVISION OF H.R. 2963, THE PECHANGA LAND TRANSFER BILL

HON. DARRELL E. ISSA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, June 9, 2008

Mr. ISSA. Madam Speaker, I rise today to speak on an important piece of legislation that I have authored, H.R. 2963, The Pechanga Band of Luiseno Mission Indians Land Transfer Act of 2007. This legislation will place 1,178 acres of land currently maintained by the Bureau of Land Management, BLM, into trust for the Pechanga Band of Luiseno Mission Indians to manage and maintain. These lands are part of the Pechanga tribe's ancestral lands and contain numerous cultural, historical, and religious elements of importance to them.

Specifically, I want to discuss Section 2(h) of the bill, which is entitled "Restricted Use of Transferred Lands."

(h) RESTRICTED USE OF TRANSFERRED LANDS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The lands transferred under subsection (a) may be used only for the protection, preservation, and maintenance of the archaeological, cultural, and wildlife resources thereon.

(2) NO ROADS.—There shall be no roads other than for maintenance purposes constructed on the lands transferred under subsection (a).

When the restrictive language in this section was initially added to H.R. 4908, the original version of the bill I introduced in the 108th Congress, it was at the request of former House Resources Committee Chairman Richard Pombo. It was added during the markup of the bill on September 22, 2004, with the purpose of ensuring that no commercial, casino or gaming related development would take place on the lands designated for transfer within the bill, and that those lands would be maintained as open space for the preservation, protection, and maintenance of the archaeological, cultural and wildlife resources thereon. The development restrictions were added with the assent of representatives of the Pechanga tribal government and myself as author of the legislation.

Since I reintroduced this bill in the 110th Congress, my intent for this section has not changed. In fact, development restrictions within the bill were strengthened further with the addition of a prohibition of the construction of any roads upon the transferred land other than for the purpose of maintenance of archaeological, cultural and wildlife resources.

It is my intention as the author of H.R. 2963 that the legislation prohibit commercial, casino or gaming related construction or development on the lands designated in this bill, and that they be preserved as open space. I believe that the restrictions on the use of transferred lands included in this bill are a clear expression of this intent. Additionally, I have conferred with the Solicitor General's Office of the Department of the Interior who state that the wording of Section 2(h) implements this intent and the land use restrictions are enforceable by the Department of the Interior.

RECOGNIZING THE RETIREMENT OF POLICE OFFICER ANDREW CROSS FROM THE FAIRFIELD POLICE DEPARTMENT

HON. ELLEN O. TAUSCHER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, June 9, 2008

Mrs. TAUSCHER. Madam Speaker, I rise to recognize Police Officer Andrew Cross who faithfully served in the California police force since 1980.

Officer Cross's service to our community began when he joined the Seaside Police Department in January 1980. From there, he transitioned to the Monterey Police Department. After 18 years of service to Monterey, Officer Cross came to the Fairfield Police Department in December 2000.

During his time with the Fairfield Police Department, Officer Cross served as a highly regarded active patrol officer.

Officer Cross's commitment to his community was evident on a daily basis. He was a loyal representative of the law enforcement community, admired for his hard work and dedication, and his presence will be missed.

HONORING MR. AUSTIN SIMON

HON. BARBARA LEE

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, June 9, 2008

Ms. LEE. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the extraordinary life of Mr. Austin Simon. A pioneer and man of great distinction, Mr. Simon was the first African-American Postmaster in the 9th Congressional District. We lost our beloved Austin Simon on May 5, 2008. Known as "Si" to his loved ones, Mr. Simon lived a full and vibrant 81 years, and although his presence will be sorely missed among his family and friends, his legacy will continue far into the future.

Austin Simon was born in 1926 in Lake Charles, Louisiana, to Seymour and Mary Simon. Mr. Simon was a retired M.S.C. Postmaster in the Bay Area and was the first African-American to head both the Richmond and Oakland, California offices. The sheer substance of such an incredible life accomplishment attests to Mr. Austin's vitality and energy. He experienced firsthand some of the most important and dynamic moments in the struggles of African-Americans in our country throughout the last century. Mr. Austin was indeed on the frontlines of history, breaking the glass ceiling for generations of African-Americans pursuing careers in the United States Post Office.

In addition to a distinguished career in the postal service, Mr. Simon served his country in the United States Army during World War II. In his community, Mr. Simon participated as an active and committed Mason for more than 50 years and served as the Honorary Grand Master of the Hiram of Tyree Grand Lodge of California. He was also a member of the Stars of Love No. 22 Order of the Eastern Star for 50 years.

Even in his retirement, Mr. Simon was incredibly energetic and proved to be an inspiring role-model throughout his life. Mr. Simon knew the importance of community stewardship and creating lasting relationships with his fellow man. After moving to Las Vegas in 1996, Mr. Simon was quick to become engaged in his new community and search out new ways to contribute to society. In Las Vegas, Mr. Simon became a member of the Alpha Lodge No. 75, which he helped establish into a reputable and impressive organization. He led his fellow Alpha Lodge No. 75 members, dedicating his time and efforts as District Deputy Grand Master.

It is obvious that Mr. Simon's lifelong profession was to help others achieve their dreams and accomplish their goals. A dedicated family man, Mr. Simon balanced his personal, professional, and political dedications so that all who were fortunate enough to know this great man could benefit from his compassion and warmth.

A pillar of strength and historic figure in our community, Mr. Simon will be sorely missed. However, we are thankful for the opportunities he gave us to come together and celebrate the hope and love in our lives. As we say goodbye to him, we have been given yet another opportunity to reflect on the rich past of the African-American community and the tumultuous American century which defined our heritage, diligence, and hopes for the future.

Austin Simon's legacy will surely live on through all who knew him, and all who know